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Metropolitanism is a phenomenon of development in our society which has completely circumvented the basic institutions upon which we have relied, making the management of all public services more complex. The major problems of metropolitanism as it affects public education are those associated with the ability of society to utilize not only its economic resources but also its social and cultural resources, which are even more significant in the education of children. Three areas of concern are the proper relations between educational government and other governmental units, the internal sharing of decision making, and the process of educational management. Exclusive exercise of local action with only local resources cannot deal successfully with the emerging problems which are not local in nature. Potential solutions to the problems require that school districts cooperate and coordinate activities. An example of what has been done in this respect is an educational research and development council, a private nonprofit corporation consisting of 22 school systems established in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, Minnesota. (HW)

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Managing Public Education in A Metropolitan Area

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A Speech Presented at the Annual Meeting

of the

Metropolitan Detroit Bureau of School Studies

December, 1967

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Managing Public Education in A Metropolitan Area

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F O R E W O R D

School Study Councils of today are beginning to approach the model originally conceived and implemented by Paul Mort in the early 1940's. The majority of these councils have made or are making transitions from discussion-study orientations to action-product orientations.

No longer are they content with being passive-lethargic groups; they have or are becoming active-dynamic groups which are having an impressive impact upon education. They have become effective mechanisms through which available resources have been brought to bear upon overwhelming educational problems and issues.

Within his speech, "Managing Public Education in a Metropolitan Area," Dr. Davis not only reflects upon the educational problems of a metropolitan area, but challenges educators to seek solutions to these problems through the utilization of Metropolitan School Study Councils.

It is both timely and appropriate that Dr. Davis be requested to speak to this issue. It is timely in that the developments within the Metropolitan Detroit area require educators to concern themselves with the phenomena of "metropolitanism" and appropriate in that Dr. Davis, et al have contributed an outstanding chapter to the current NSSE yearbook concerned with "Metropolitanism: Its Challenge to Education."

It is hoped that his comments will inspire MDBSS members to become more involved in the development of this organization and to meet his challenge to "put it to work."

Gerald G. Mansergh
Executive Director

It is my intent this evening to discuss with you several matters which I believe to be pertinent to the concerns of this organization. First, I will review several severe problem areas facing educational management. Second, I will review the inadequacy of present solutions and suggest potential for solution. Finally, I should like to outline the manner in which such potential has been applied in another metropolitan area.

Some Sample Problems Facing Educational Management

I would like to talk first about a developing phenomena in American society and its impact on public education. It is a phenomena which I trust you will not require me to define because I think essentially we are not yet able to define it. We call it metropolitanism. As I said, I cannot define the term yet nor have I discovered anyone who can satisfactorily. We tend to think' it might be terrible but we don't know. When we discover what metropolitanism is, it may not be so bad after all. But I think this is the major phenomena which we must face in our society. I think it is certainly the major phenomena that we must fact in public education.

It is quite apparent that in the complex social system which typifies a metropolitan area the management of all public services becomes more complex. I think you will all agree that management of education has become more complex for you. From the great variety of ways of analyzing the social system I should like to draw one simple distinction which will help us recognize the impact of metropolitanism on our schools. As a sub-part of the total social system, public education is one which faces compelling requirements to adjust, to adapt, to continually change the essential nature of the service it provides within the social system. The sociologist calls this a "critical" system. This is a system which must change and adapt as the social system changes. And therein lies the basis for the complexities we face. How shall we change? How do we meet the social demands

that face us? An example of a social system within a complex society which would not be defined as a "critical" system would be a fire department. Its role in putting out fires may become bigger, but essentially would not change as the society becomes more complex or population becomes more dense in a given area. We are quite aware that in the years ahead, in the life-time of most of us in this room, the American population will predominately live in areas which will have a concentration of population probably double that which exists in the Detroit metropolitan area today. If we think we have problems now, you can visualize that they may become more complex.

The major fact about metropolitanism is that it exists today. It is a phenomena of development in our society which has completely circumvented the basic institutions of our society upon which we have relied. Look at the institutions of government. I haven't studied the Detroit metropolitan area in great detail, but I have been working in metropolitan areas all over the country, and I think probably some of the kinds of questions that are being raised everywhere are also being raised here. What is the role of the municipal government? Of village government, of township government, of county government, of state government? Governmental institutions which were useful to us in one stage of our society suddenly have little utility in dealing with the complexities of metropolitanism. This evening I am going to propose that for many purposes, the complexities of metropolitan society have also overrun the typical approach to organization for public education. It is time to look for potential solutions for dealing with these kinds of problems through new organizational patterns.

When we deal with the problems that this complexity of society presents we tend to talk about them in terms of the kinds of things we understand. We still hear people, for example, talking about problems in an area like the Detroit metropolitan area as urban problems or as suburban problems. I submit to you that they are neither one. That they have been transformed into problems which are neither

urban or suburban, but in fact metropolitan. In most suburban areas which are a part of every metropolitan area, there is a tendency for people who live in those areas to be concerned about what is going on in the central city. But their inability to describe it in any other terms than as urban or suburban really doesn't develop any great commitment to do anything about it. The reverse of this is also true. The major fact that we must face, however, is that the city of Detroit in this metropolitan area could not possibly exist without its suburbs nor could the suburbs exist without the City of Detroit. We have tended to crystallize the solution of our problems in terms of our past understanding, and we are discovering, much to our consternation, that those solutions based upon our past understandings and categorizations simply are not very useful. We face increasing difficulties in dealing with this phenomena because we have not yet been able to make a social transformation to understand its complexity and therefore to develop new and innovative solutions to these problems.

In educational government we have been so very innovative! In the State of Minnesota we are right now trying to reduce the number of school districts by <u>adding</u> school districts together to make fewer of them. We have 1,200 and we feel maybe we ought to have about only 100. The converse of this is the Bundy report concerning the organization of the New York City schools. I understand that it proposes that the New York City schools be <u>divided</u> into somewhere between thirty and sixty independent school districts. We have been so innovative in looking at the organizational structure of American public education that we've learned to add and we've learned to divide, but we haven't learned to approach the organizational structure on any other basis save the spotty development of intermediate units. I should note that some of the best of these exist in this very area.

To bring this kind of approach in real focus let me cite one of today's Detroit newspaper articles entitled, "The School Board on the Way Out." The basic suggestion proposes the division of Detroit into nine school districts.

There is a sensitivity to a problem where attempted solutions have so far been purely mechanical. It seems highly unlikely to me that mechanical solutions shall solve the problems which are far more complex than simply dividing New York City or Detroit. Its hardly likely that a mechanical division will automatically solve any kind of a problem at all. It might indeed create problems of even greater complexities, it might crystallize some of those problems into something which would be more difficult to deal with. So it seems to me that as we look at this phenomena of metropolitanism, the great social, cultural, and indeed the economic impact that this phenomena is having upon us, we must turn our attention to finding ways of dealing with the problems created for us in somewhat different ways. Historical solutions are not particularly appropriate to the kind of age that we live in and more pertinent, I suppose, the kind of age we are educating children and youth to live in. Because they will certainly have to live in that world, the major question we have to face is, can we effectively prepare them to live in it, even if we can't prepare them to understand it?

I would categorize the major problems of metropolitanism, as it affects public education, as being those associated with the ability of the society to bring to bear the kinds of resources that must be brought to bear to produce the kind of education that will equip our children and youth to live in the world of tomorrow. These are cultural resources, social resources, and economic resources.

We have so far been inventive enough to be able to bring to bear economic resources. We have equalization at the State level. In the State of New York there is a program of state aid which provides for municipal overburden; providing extra money to the six large cities in the State because they obviously have more complex problems in education. We hear comments from all over the nation about the need for creating super tax structures, metropolitan tax structrues, in order to bring to bear the economic resources of a metropolitan area on the problems where they exist in that metropolitan area. And the Edina's, the Grosse Pointe's, and the Shaker

Heights' get a little nervous about that because it sounds like somebody wants to share their wealth with them. There are some problems with that kind of a concept, but we have had at least some reports, like those from Charles Benson, about the economic factors and fiscal realities of educational metropolitanism.

We have not as yet had any substantial insight about how we can utilize the resources which I consider to be even more significant in the education of children and youth: our cultural and social resources. I think this is the major area. You can build all kind of tax structures. The wealth of this nation certainly can be tapped in a great variety of ways to deal with these problems. But I submit to you, that our fundamental problem is not one of wealth, or the lack thereof; nor is it one of the proper distribution thereof. Its the problem of bringing to bear cultural and social resources that are so desperately needed for the adequate education of the children we serve.

I would not pretend that these brief references in any way illustrate the dimensions of the total problems, but I chose to start with metropolitanism because you do live in a metropolitan area. You are in the middle of the phenomena. And it is in the middle of that phenomena that you have the responsibility for carrying out the mission of public education. It does very little good to wish for a different world. This is the one you have and the challenge that lies at the hand of management of public schools is the challenge of successfully educating a population in the area in which we live.

One of the major areas of concern which you must deal with immediately is the proper relations between educational government and other governmental units. There is much current concern about the involvement of the Federal Government in education as well as the involvement of the state government. But what about metropolitan government? What shall be the relationship between the local school district and metropolitan government? We will see the development of metropolitan governments around the nation. The pertinence of this to you comes up in an article from one of

Detroit's newspapers published today. The article refers to metropolitan educational government. There is a suggestion here that there ought to be a council of boards of education to cover the entire metropolitan area to correlate and coordinate programs. These things are in your newspapers now. People are talking about these problems and people are inventing ways to deal with this phenomena for you. I'm not really very certain that educational management in this area is deeply involved in those discussions. It might be quite pertinent to become involved because the decision process is underway.

What are some of the specific problems with which you must deal in this metropolitan area? Is there necessity for training, recruitment, and constant retraining of personnel to serve in our schools? And when I say personnel to serve in our schools, I partly refer to teachers. But it seems to me that one of the major challenges we have is to find ways to use other skills that exist in our culture and society in our educational programs. There are immense resources, but we haven't even been convinced that it's legitimate to use people other than those who happen to have been trained as teachers in our schools. But I submit that we are missing immense resources. Can we find a way to introduce them into the process? How do we deal with the ever perplexing problem of inter-group relations in an increasingly complex society? There is no question that these problems shall become infinitely more complex rather than more simple. They can't just be wished away, it simply will delay the time when we must deal with them. Of great significance is the matter of planning for education. I haven't looked at all at the total budget of the school systems in the Detroit metropolitan area; I can only make a random guess at the number of children that are served in this metropolitan area, but I think I could predict with fair accuracy, that in the next generation, thirty or thirty-five years if you will, in the Detroit Metropolitan area you will build as many school buildings as you now have. In other words, you will duplicate what you have done in the last 100 years. I would assume in the City of Detroit, you must

have a school building 100 years old. Most cities do. But you are going to do that again in the next 30 years or so and that expenditure won't cost you more than four or five billion dollars.

It would seem appropriate that maybe some good hard-nosed planning should be brought to bear so that expenditure of resources of that order could be most effective, and can really contribute to the improvement of the education of children and youth of our society. And of course, I have said nothing about other educational programs. I think we recognize in the management of public education, that there is an increasing tendency on the part of our society to create other educational programs. There are federal government programs; there are all kinds of educational programs. That arena which we once held exclusively, is now being shared. We really don't understand what is occurring, but we are somewhat concerned about it. How do we effectively deal with that kind of a phenomena? How do we accommodate to it? How do we coordinate with it? These are the kinds of problems that you will find increasingly apparent in your metropolitan society.

Internal Sharing of Decision-Making

A second area of concern I should like to deal with briefly is more familiar to you. It is certainly a result of the increasing complexity of our society and probably associated somewhat with metropolitanism because this is the place that these things will tend to appear first. It seems to me that I recall that you have had some recent experience in the Detroit area which has focused your attention probably more than anytime previously on staff relations in the public schools. I understand that some of you have been rather dramatically introduced to the phenomena of sharing the decision-making process in your institutions. I see a couple of Deans sitting here; I don't think that has happened in their institutions yet, but it will. Its inevitable, that it will. I think it would be safe to say that the quality of that experience you had most recently in staff relations has

been somewhat perplexing to you. And you find it very difficult to accommodate that kind of experience to the plain facts and problems of managing an educational institution. Before the meeting got under way this evening I heard people talking about "the immense problem of what do you do when you bankrupt the community." Where do you go from there? I think we have to recognize that this is simply a first step. The decision-making process is being shared with groups of people that we really didn't anticipate it would be shared with. And furthermore, this phenomena itself will bring about a sharing of that decision-making with even other groups. The exercise of teacher power, which is essentially what collective bargaining is, is pretty powerful power, I think you recognize. The exercise of that power will center upon those places where there is economic flexibility. The local communities no longer have it; that power will be brought to bear at other levels of government. And it doesn't seem any problem at all to foresee the potentiality of nation-wide bargaining in public education. Because let's fact it, economic power exists to the greatest degree at the Federal level. It's entirely possible that this will occur, and I suggest that in your operation or management of an educational program in your community, it will create another partner for you that you might have some misgivings about at the present time. It is certain that we have a considerable lack of understanding about what that might mean. So essentially we need some ways to try to preceive what the potential alternatives might be, what kind of problems might occur, how we might accommodate to them, and how we might assure that the mission of education will continue, so the quality of education which we provide for children and youth will be satisfactory in relation to their need for it, no matter what kind of involvements of phenomena we find ourselves faced with.

The Process of Educational Management

There is one other area I would like to mention as a potential impact which indeed might be greater than any of those I have mentioned so far. I refer you to

the November issue of the Phi Delta Kappan and the guest editorial by Carroll Hanson. Some of you might have read that guest editorial, "Giants in the School House." He recites there for us some information about the readiness which is taking place in American industry to descend upon American public education. As he quotes, in the words of one General Electric Corporation official, "The education market has no conceivable saturation point." And to a great degree, private industry is going to help us with materials, with gadgets, (and I don't mean that in a derogatory sense) some of which might be useful. But they are also going to help us with something else that we really hadn't counted upon. Francis Keppel, who is now chairman of the General Learning Corporation, which had an initial capitalization of just $37,000,000, speaks about the development of materials, the training of personnel, and the management of educational programs. There are private corporations prepared at the moment to contract with boards of education to manage the whole process in the school system, to provide a management team; you know the superintendents, principals, all those people--just move in a team and run the ball game. That's the way the New York Yankees do it; when they hire a manager, they let him pick his own coaches and they come in and they do it. We wouldn't think of hiring a football coach at the University of Michigan unless we gave him the right to bring his own staff with him, would we. We don't hire superintendents quite that way. But private industry is prepared to put together those teams and to utilize management tools and concepts which we in educational administration are only dimly aware. They're very pervasive tools, I might say. We hear words like system analysis and operation research; and I suggest that maybe we better find out what all those things are about. We might even find out before we are replaced, if we move along with the kind of speed we should!

I have cited some problems associated with metropolitanism, problems which I think you people are going to live with and a couple of others that are really not directly related to metropolitanism, but I think more directly related to the complexity of our society.

Some Potential for Solution

Let me talk a little about the potential for solution. I heard much this evening about the Metropolitan Detroit Bureau of School Studies. The name would indicate that there has been some recognition for the 21 years of existence of this organization that there is a metropolitan concern. I think therein lies some foresight we ought to recognize and to begin to take advantage of. I will have to challenge the notion, for example, as well as the historical record, that educational issues such as those that I just sampled for you, can be dealt with by any individual school district. There isn't one big enough, well enough organized, or rich enough to deal with the kinds of problems that are right in front of you. You might feel like some of them are right behind you, pushing you along at the moment. But this is the reality of managing public education. I frankly don't believe there is any individual school district that is capable of dealing with any one of these problems, much less all of them simultaneously as we must necessarily do. Are school boards and administrative staffs plagued by a nagging feeling that they are losing control? That's what I hear people saying around the country and that's what I've heard again here this evening. That suddenly a lot of roles have been changed by somebody, and you're not quite sure by whom, but they are obviously changed on you. That the task of keeping one step ahead of disaster consumes so much of your time that you really have no time to think about the process of education, to consider what kinds of developments ought to be taking place in order to assure the continuity and the quality of the program which you manage. That the management of schools has become simply a matter of moving from one crisis to the next and that in the management of these instituitions, you usually do not participate in deciding which crisis you deal with next. Somebody else decides that for you. This leaves us very little time to think about planning, development, and research. We Have such difficulty keeping up with the process we are conducting we have no time to stop and look at it. Since you feel that way, I suggest you relax a little bit

because that doesn't make you unique. Most administrators across the country feel just that way. If you don't feel that way, enjoy the feeling while you have it because you will have the other one pretty soon. It just appears to be inevitable in the kind of role we're in.

As I assess this phenomena, I am forced to conclude that the exclusive exercise of local action with only local resources cannot successfully deal with the emerging problems which are not local in nature and consequently are not subject to local solution. I don't believe there is any feasible way that you can deal with problems in a local community when that problem is essentially not local in nature, but metropolitan. Neither do I think that there is any feasible way that you can build a wall high enough to avoid the pervasiveness of these problems. In short, I guess I'm saying that continuance of the exercise of local power, in an exclusively local arena, simply is unworkable. And I would further suggest because of the complexity of our society and the massive job, the massive increase in the quality of education we must provide because of the complexity of society, that it is not even desirable. Let me cite a case in point using one of the illustrations I used previously. If my facts are correct, I'm referring to your recent experience relating to the collective action of teachers. I talked with Mike Lieberman last week and he tells me that the Michigan Education Association had budgeted last year $247,000 for legal fees, etc., in connection with the collective bargaining process. I also understand that that quarter million that they had budgeted only for that purpose was considerably in excess of the total budget of the Michigan School Boards Association. And knowing professional associations as I do, I felt that it wasn't even worth the effort to compare that quarter of a million dollars with the budget of the Michigan School Administrators Association; if they indeed have a budget. So you see the resources are being organized in such a way that the individual school district hardly stands a chance. And I submit that we need to look for ways in which we can deal with the phenomena for what it

is. No local school district of any size has the resources to deal with that kind of power and the exercise thereof (and that's simply what it is) and I don't say that in a derogatory sense because I happen to believe that it's perfectly legitimate for teachers to participate in decision-making. But even if you could deal with that on a monetary basis, there are other dimensions which you cannot deal with. No school district could possibly deal with it in terms of something far more important. In the process of bargaining, the fundamental fact that makes the difference is the character and the extent of the information that you have available to you. You've got to know what the facts are and when the teachers say that over in that district they are paying X number of dollars for such and so, you better know whether they are and you better know what the work assignment is that goes with that pay. In the collective bargaining process, information is power. And on the basis of information necessary for this process, most school districts, most individual school districts, are powerless because they simply do not have the kinds of information that are required to deal effectively in the process. It calls for an order of solution which we have simply not recognized yet or have not been able to implement effectively.

I happen to believe that if we are to effectively put together the cultural, the social resources that are required to do the job, then we have to develop a construct in which school districts can cooperate and coordinate activities. And we have to put that structure together in such a way that we can gain access to other kinds of institutions in our society. I understand that in this cooperative organization you have three major institutions of higher education. Institutions of higher education have been known to have some pretty powerful resources and I commend you for that. There are not very many institutions of higher education in this country that consider it appropriate to make their resources available to the operational level of public schools. And I think that the management personnel of the public schools in this area ought to take advantage of that opportunity of

access to those resources. Universities have people with skills in looking at problems which we haven't ever applied in public education and as a professor of educational administration, I think it is high time that you start asking some other kinds of people, other than kinds like me, to look at some of your problems. Every university has sociologists, anthropologists, economists, political scientists, social psychologists, industrial relations experts, and I understand you have used some of those last types at least in this area. When I talk about the access to other kinds of resources, this is essentially what I mean. Can an individual school district develop a way to get access or develop adequate relations with other units of government? Not likely. Can an individual school district, for example, enter into a program with a private industry for the development of materials? Not likely because of the commitments involved. But I submit to you that a private non-profit corporation such as this, which is a cooperative group of schools working together, can, with no commitments, engage in effective relationships with any agency, public or private if the emphasis is on research and development on the kinds of things which will have a potential for improving the education of children in those school districts. And if such developments do take a form which are effective then the individual school district can exercise its option to take advantage of that development or not to take advantage of it. But the opportunity to decide on the part of the local district will never exist until such developments take place. I think it is extremely important that there is a construct here which is not a formal, legally constituted governmental agency. I don't think we know enough yet to formalize or institutionalize this kind of an endeavor among school systems. I think it is much more appropriate at this stage, that these kinds of research and developmental efforts take place on an informal basis, and you have the perfect setting. And you have a dollar reserve to start with. Here at your fingertips--you've had it for twenty-one years--you have a vehicle which you can utilize on a cooperative basis to get at problems that are plaguing you and

no local school district is committed to accept or reject automatically those kinds of things in which you pursue development. When the development has taken place, the pilots have been run, the personnel retrained, then the local district can decide whether the development is appropriate. And if fifty per cent of the things that you do cooperatively work out, you are a whole lot better off than Willie Mays. He can only bat about 340. Don't expect to succeed all the time. I think we have to be willing to take a chance to make a mistake, because if we never do things except the things that are sure bets, than our only alternative is to never do anything.

An Example of a Developing Mechanism

Let me illustrate for you very briefly, some of the kinds of things that have been done and I'm going to make a specific reference. In 1963 there was established in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area an educational research and development council. It was established as a private non-profit corporation consisting of twenty-two school systems and a total budget of $15,000, part of which was a foundation grant.

In the fourth year of that operation there were thirty-eight school systems involved. The membership fees of those thirty-eight school systems raised $31,456. Their membership fee is three or four times what yours is and its woefully small. Your's I couldn't even classify as woefully small, if you'll pardon me for saying that. The total budget of this educational research and development council in 1967 was $340,992. Those school systems in a cooperative effort have been able to generate ten times as much money as they put into the ball game. There are Title III Projects, there are foundation grants, there are research grants, there are contracts for all kinds of things. In this type of setting a group of school systems can get access to a variety of resources. They have made television films, they have made 16mm films, 8mm films, instituted operational programs on a pilot basis, and developed instructional materials. In these four years some fifty studies have been completed bearing on all phases of school operation. One example of the

kinds of studies performed is the fact that at the present time seven studies are underway bearing on the process of collective bargaining in public schools.

A unique way of handiing the fundamental difference between experimental pilot programs and operational programs has been developed. A specific example best illustrates this. In 1965 the council received a half-million dollar grant to develop a research demonstration program for trainable adolescents. This program served twenty-two students the first year at a cost of about $7,000 per pupil. Currently the program serves some 150 pupils at a cost of $1200 per pupil. During the research demonstration phase the program was governed by the council. Now that is is moving into a full operation program it is being moved under the control of another agency. When this is accomplished the council can then turn its attention to the research and development of other new programs.

Unfortunately, Minnesota does not have the advantage of strong intermediate units so some basic development was required to establish an adequate school controlled agency to operate this program.

These brief illustrations provide only a sample of the kinds of things which are effectively being pursued through cooperative action. It should be very clear that such an organization cannot (and should not) attempt to operate educational programs. There are legal agencies which should do this.

Through the median of cooperative efforts, I submit to you that there lies an access to solutions of problems, that you simply don't have access to in any other way. School districts in this country are pretty well limited in the kinds of activities they engage in effectively. They are created for the purpose of conducting educational programs. They don't spend any money on research and development. Universities tend to spend money on research. Maybe some good research ideas from you, would be considered good ideas by them. Universities know how to get money for research; its been aptly demonstrated. I think its time, facing the complexities that we have that we learn how to put together the compositive

resources in people, in finances, resources from our culture, from our society, that will enable us to deal effectively with these problems. It is our major responsibility to provide an educational program for children and youth which will successfully prepare them to live in that kind of a world that we see out there in the next thirty or forty years. You see, those little kids now in the first, second, and third grades are going to live most of their lives in the next century, and its quite likely that it will be different from this one. And our test will be, not whether we are comfortable today in the process, but whether they are successful in the next century. It seems to me that it is time in the development of American public education that we quit talking about utilizing all the resources available and find effective ways to bring them to bear on the problems that we have. You have an effective mechanism--I challenge you to put it to work.